

STREET BEATS

'Reports' has polished look of MTV

By Jill Hamilton
special writer

When you tune in public access cable television, you pretty much know what to expect—a local cinema verite of town meetings and high school sports.

But, wait, what's this on the Bloomfield Hills cable channel? Tone Loe discussing his new album? Debbie Gibson talking about her upcoming tour? Surely, there must be some mistake. This can't be community access television.

It's no mistake. It's "VTV-Special Report, Rock Interviews," a music video show airing every Wednesday at 7 p.m. on local cable TV.

"Special Report" doesn't look like local television. It's a professional, flashy show with MTV-style graphics and leads of famous guests, including Was (Not Was), The Information Society and Cinderella.

"Special Report" was created two years ago by Neil Mandt, a Birmingham Lakeside High School graduate. If ever something could be called a one-man-show, this is it.

Mandt writes, directs, produces, edits and hosts every show. Because he does so much for the show, Mandt used the name Neil Charles on some of the credits.

We caught up with Mandt in his Bloomfield Hills home, sitting in an office which is decorated primarily with rock'n'roll posters and empty cigarette packages.

"This is my desk," said Mandt, gesturing to an open briefcase on the floor with papers heaped on top of it. Mandt realized the power of bluffing in 1987, when he decided he wanted to have U2 on the show.

"I CALLED up the record company and said I wanted to interview U2," Mandt said. "I was told with this big show called VTV, which was really nothing at the time."

The record company didn't grant Mandt the interview, but they did



Neil Mandt writes, directs, produces, edits and hosts every "Special Report" show he does for local cable television.

give him photo passes for the concert.

"I didn't even have any film in the camera, but I was back stage and bumped into the guys," Mandt said. "I wasn't legitimate at all. I didn't have anything for a show. It was a total joke, but I thought I can do something with this."

Mandt began to establish credibility with the record companies and so Virgin Records offered him an interview with the decidedly non-famous group Balom and the Angel. The interview became the first edition of "Special Reports."

But this year has been the best one for "Special Reports." Mandt has secured interviews with some of the hottest performers passing through Detroit and the show now airs on United Cable, Booth Cable and Continental Cable. He hopes to syndicate the show on National College Television and would like to win the College Emmy award to fund more episodes of "Special Reports."

MANDT SHOWED a tape of an early version of "Special Reports" and a tape of one of the more recent shows. The difference is remarkable. The early show featured the usual local cable fare. The camera was stationary, the sound quality poor, and a roadie for Balom and the Angel walked right in front of the camera. The recent show was as good as any music show on MTV. A flashy new opening sequence had been added, Mandt spoke in front of a backdrop with a montage of the best graphics of some "Special Reports" finer moments, and rap artist Tone Loe was featured in an interview.

Though Mandt has been able to secure interviews with top groups, he is also interested in showcasing smaller, less famous bands. "As a video show, we want to present the gamut and this includes new acts as well as the better know, bigger bands," he said.

BEING IN front of the camera is not new to Mandt. At the age of 10, he walked onto the set of "Word of Honor," which was being filmed nearby, and asked producer Alex Karas how to get into show business. Within six weeks, Mandt had landed an acting job in a commercial.

Mandt said his experience in front of the camera has helped him behind the camera. "I think you have to spend time in front of the camera before you can know how to direct and produce," he said.

1980s 'best band' waits to be found

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

The Call is either the 1980s' best kept secret or the band hasn't taken the hint to call it quits.

Since 1982, the group has been an entity on college/alternative radio but has never reached a megastar status despite some high-profile admirers, including Peter Gabriel and actor Harry Dean Stanton, and a deluge of favorable press clippings.

These items along with six solid albums have never been enough to vault the group from relative obscurity.

"Our songs are much more well-known than we are," said Michael Been, bass player and songwriter who Rolling Stone magazine called the "most literate lyricists in rock'n'roll today."

"We've had a hard time with publicity in this business," he said. "Publicists are expensive. Their fee is \$30,000 a month and that doesn't include the costs of the ads they take out in trade publications."

Perhaps the Call's lack of recognition goes deeper than that. This is a band that has always been regarded as a literate, driving rock'n'roll outfit. Yet it never hopped the right bandwagon.

So here it is nearly the 1990s, and rock'n'roll's touted best new band is still waiting.

IF THE Call was banking on this album, things didn't get off to a good start. Elektra Records refused to release "Let The Day Begin" saying it wasn't commercial enough.

Undaunted, the band shopped the record around. MCA picked up the option and put out the LP, one of the group's most accessible to date.

"They (Elektra) just didn't like it," said Been, revealing a bit of honesty that gives the band's music a stamp of sincerity. "I think if it would have appealed to them on an aesthetic level, they would've gone with it. In fact, a vast majority of the people there liked it. There was only a few who didn't."

The Call kept busy. The group



The Call, since 1982, has been an entity on college/alternative radio but has never reached a megastar status.

toured with actor Harry Dean Stanton as The Repo Men ("Harry sings, he has a beautiful voice," Been said). Prior to that, Been tried on acting. He was cast as the apostle John by Martin Scorsese in the controversial film "Last Temptation of Christ."

Their own work has continued to evolve through the years. Gone are the days of frustration and anger at the world's problems, Been said.

The Call goes back to 1980 when Been and drummer Scott Musick joined with guitarist Tom Ferriter

and bass player Greg Freeman. The group's self-titled LP, "The Call," was released in 1982.

The group's follow-up LP, "Modern Romans," featured the college radio hit "The Walls Came Down," perhaps an apt song with the current situation in East Berlin.

The Call will perform Monday, Nov. 20, at Nectarine Ballroom, 510 Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

The Call also have an in-store appearance at 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, at SchoolKid's Records in Ann Arbor.

REVIEWS

PUMP — Aerosmith

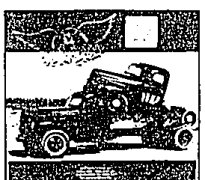
"Pump" (Geffen) shouldn't even be a good record, much less a great record. It is the product of an aging dinosaur rock outfit which broke up rather appreciatively as the '70s drew to a close, only to reform when the members' splinter groups and solo projects were shown to have limited earning potential.

Aerosmith's main drawing cards, lead singer Steven Tyler, and guitarist Tom Perry, both allowed various excuses to get so far out of hand that they almost managed to wreck the "walking death" crown from the shambling shell of a man known as Keith Richards.

And their last record, while entertaining, was the result of the band's reluctant collaboration with ghostwriters Desmond Child and Jim Vallance, who were called in when Perry and Tyler couldn't come up with enough songs for an LP.

On "Pump," Child and Vallance are credited with help on three songs (as opposed to the seven they racked up on "Permanent Vacation"), and these songs are the weakest on a very strong record. Perhaps years of detox have finally shaken the cobwebs from the Tyler/Perry songwriting team.

Ultimately, "Pump's" success must be attributed to Aerosmith's refusal to content themselves with being just a hard rock band. Sure, they still pack a wallop, and Tyler



still tosses off lyrics like, "I've got a girl friend with the hottest-coolie teeth." She's got the crackerjack, but all I want's the prize, but the songs are much more than adolescent hormone percolators.

Aerosmith has a remarkable talent for incorporating elements of other rock genres into their hard rock approach. "Don't Get Mad, Get Even" nods in the direction of Delta Blues before Joe Perry's Les Paul gets ornery. Throughout the album, the band lays down harmonies so clean and so pretty, they are at times reminiscent of Brian Wilson.

"Permanent Vacation's" cover of "I'm Down" revealed Aerosmith as a group of unrepentant Beatle fans. "Pump" continues this acknowledgment, with piccolo trumpet flourishes that recall "Penny Lane," a snippet of raga that sounds like a Harrison/Shankar effort, and an enigmatic mix which sends vocals and instruments rocketing back and forth between the left and right channels.

— John Logie

FRANK — Squeeze

Meet the new Squeeze, same as the old Squeeze.

"Frank," the latest release from the veteran British pop outfit, won't put them on the pop map 10 years ago. Like their earlier work, "Frank" is full of well-crafted melodies that are shamelessly pop and proud of it. But hearing this 30 times a day would beat the usual force-fedding of Top 40 fare that hit radio dishes out.

The first single trying to crack the charts is "If It's Love," a traditional Squeeze tune with repetitive guitar swirls and chirping keyboards bolstered by great rhythm from drummer Gillian Lavis. Glenn Tilbrook's slyrup vocal chords are as clear as ever.

Thanks to their knack for creating pop songs, Tilbrook and Chris Difford were once hailed as a potential Lennon and McCartney of the 80s. The pair exhibits their Beatlesque side on "Frank," especially on the gem "Slaughtered, Cooled and Heartbroken," which Difford co-wrote



as if performing in a cheap cocktail lounge.

Difford and Tilbrook display their storytelling talent on "Rose I Said," a musical carbon copy of "Hourglass" from the band's last album. They also prove that they can write dull, sappy songs, too, as "Can of Worms" and "Peyton Place" exemplify. For good measure, they include a perfectly awful song about the joys of menstruation—"She Doesn't Have to Shave."

A final note to highlight is keyboardist Jools Holland's key songwriting contribution to "Frank," the piano-laden ditty "D.J. Jazzy." The jazzy tune is but a brief departure from the safe, traditional pop that prevails "Frank." Why fix something that isn't broken?

— John Cortez

IN CONCERT

● **ROBB ROY**
Hobb Roy will perform Monday, Nov. 20, at Todd's, 5139 E. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 366-TODD.

● **FIRST LIGHT**
First Light will perform Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 20-21, at Hick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **HOLY COWS**
Holy Cows will perform on Monday, Nov. 20, at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **THE CALL**
The Call will perform on Monday, Nov. 20, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

● **DICKIES**
The Dickies will perform with guests, Young Fresh Fellow, on Tuesday, Nov. 21, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **BILLY SQUIER**
Billy Squier will perform with guests, Rickie Lee and King's X, on Tuesday, Nov. 21, at the Royal Oak Music Theatre. Tickets are \$20. For information, call 367-6000.

● **D.C. DRIVE**
D.C. Drive will perform on Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 21-22, and Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24-25, at Jagger's, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For information, call 681-1700.

● **SUSPECTS**
The Suspects will perform on Wednesday, Nov. 22, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

● **ECK-A-MOUSE**
Eck-a-Mouse will perform with guest, King David, on Wednesday, Nov. 22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **PHINEAS GAGE**
Phineas Gage will perform with guests, Colorful Trauma, on Wednesday, Nov. 22, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760.

● **JEANNIE AND THE DREAMS**
Jeannie and the Dreams will perform Wednesday, Nov. 22, at Hick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **CHILI PEPPERS**
Hed Hot Chili Peppers will perform 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22, at The Latin Quarter, 3067 E. Grand Blvd., at Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. Tickets are \$17.50 in advance. For information, call 665-4755.

● **THE SHY**
The Shy will perform on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24-25, at Griffs Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. For information, call 334-9332.

● **BEFORE OR AFTER**
Before Or After will perform on Friday, Nov. 24, at Psychecks, 2922 Caniff.



Snookie Pryor will perform Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24-25 at Sully's in Dearborn.

east of Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8934.

● **SEE DICK RUN**
See Dick Run, Scott Campbell, Orange Roughies and Goober & The Peas will all perform Friday, Nov. 24, at Todd's, 5139 E. Seven Mile, Detroit. Admission is \$5. For information, call 366-TODD.

● **SNOOKIE PRYOR**
Snookie Pryor will perform on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24-25, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

● **VOLEBEATS**
Volebeats will perform on Friday, Nov. 24, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, east of I-75. For information, call 365-9760.

● **MAD CAT RUTH**
Mad Cat Ruth's Pressure Cooker will perform on Friday, Nov. 24, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **INVAIN**
Invain will perform with guests, Culture Shock, on Friday, Nov. 24, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

● **IDOTS**
The Idots will perform with the Orange Roughies on Saturday, Nov. 25, at Finney's Pub, 3955 Woodward. For information, call 831-8070.

● **10,000 MANIACS**
10,000 Maniacs will perform on Saturday, Nov. 25, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$20. For information, call 567-6000.

● **SCOTT MORGAN**
Scott Morgan Band will perform with guests, Cull Heroes, on Saturday, Nov. 25, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

● **THOSE WHO DREAM**
Those Who Dream will perform with guests, Enemy Squad, on Saturday, Nov. 25, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760.

● **B-52s**
B-52s will perform on Sunday, Nov. 25, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$18.50. For information, call 567-6000.

TOP HITS LOCAL

- Best-selling records of the week:
- "Listen to Your Heart," Raxette
 - "Sowing the Seeds of Love," Tears for Fears
 - "When I See You Smile," Bad English
 - "Cover Girl," New Kids on the Block
 - "The Way That You Love Me," Paula Abdul
 - "Love in an Elevator," Aersmith
 - "Rock Wit'cha," Bobby Brown
 - "Love Shack," B52's
 - "Angella," Richard Marx
 - "Blame It on the Rain," Milli Vanilli

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4.5 p.m. Sundays (repeated 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDRB-FM.

- "One of Those Days," Caruso
- "History," Tom Thoms
- "Jo," Sny Snyol
- "Runaround Sue," Joey Harlo
- "Smoker," Terminal White
- "Muskrat Factory," Warworld
- "I Understand," Art School
- "Lick the Boot," Grievance Committee
- "Only You," Idiots
- "Tribe," Rubber

(Source: Cashbox magazine)

REVIEWS

THE SENSUAL WORLD

— Kate Bush

From the tender age of 16, when Kate Bush was discovered by Pink Floyd guitarist Dave Gilmour, she has never ceased to amaze and astound. She introduced herself on the unsuspecting world with her shrieking dramatics on "Wuthering Heights."

Being the daughter of a highly placed record company executive, she was immediately thrown under suspicion by the wary, street wise musicians. But her unique style, her dedication to her craft and the fact that she almost completely ignored the "normal" music business rigmarole — LP, interviews, tour, interviews — had gained her a reputation as one of those people at the vanguard of modern music.

The absence of Kate Bush live shows, particularly those outside her native England, due in most part to her fear of flying, has done little to curb the growth of a dedicated army of followers.

Her latest LP, "The Sensual World" (Columbia), will not impede this. From the opening track, "The Sensual World," where Kate's breathless vocals on the chorus of "Ohhh Yahhhess" will leave any healthy, red-blooded American breathless, to the complex melodies of "Rocket Tail," Bush continues to



show the vocal maturity developing from her last few albums, particularly "Hounds of Love."

Her use of unusual musical inspirations continues apace. As with aforementioned "Hounds of Love" album, she combines some traditional Irish instruments.

Lyrical, she is always challenging. Revealing her loneliness on "Deeper Understanding," her sensuality on "The Sensual World," maturity and self-confidence on "The Fog," insecurity in "Reaching Out" and lost loves in "Never Be Mine." That fascinating voice, her intriguing and challenging lyrics, the powerful musical backing tracks and the high quality recording makes the LP well worth dedicating whatever length of time it takes to fall in love with it.

— Cormac Wright